

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal whose intestinal flora is out of balance, comprising orally administering to a bird or a mammal in need thereof ~~whose intestinal flora is out of balance~~ a food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said one or more sphingolipids are present in said food in an amount of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said sphingolipid is present in said food in an amount of 1 to 10 wt.%.

4. (Currently amended) A method for improving the composition of the intestinal flora of a bird or a mammal whose intestinal flora is out of balance, comprising orally administering to a bird or a mammal in need thereof ~~whose intestinal flora is out of balance~~ a pharmaceutical preparation comprising a sphingolipid chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or suitable salt thereof, and one or more excipients.

5. (Original) A method according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

6. (Withdrawn) A food in which one or more sphingolipids chosen from the group consisting of phytosphingosine, sphingosine, lysosphingomyelin and sphinganine, or a precursor, a derivative, or suitable salt thereof are overabundant.

7. (Withdrawn) A food according to claim 6, in which said one or more sphingolipids are present in an amount from 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

8. (Withdrawn) A food according to claim 6, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

9. (Withdrawn) An animal feed comprising a food according to any one of claims 6-8 or 13.

Claims 10.-11. Canceled.

12. (Withdrawn) A method for the preparation of a food according to any one of claims 6-8 or 13, comprising incorporating said sphingolipid, or a derivative, or suitable salt thereof in a food in a content of 0.05 to 50 wt.%.

13. (Withdrawn) A food according to claim 7, wherein said sphingolipid is phytosphingosine.

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said bird or mammal is suffering from one or more of diarrhea, an infection of the gastrointestinal tract, liver damage, intestinal cancer, poor immunological function, distension

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due to gas, poor digestion, poor absorption of nutrients, and vitamin deficiency.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said bird or mammal is suffering from one or more of diarrhea, an infection of the gastrointestinal tract, liver damage, intestinal cancer, poor immunological function, distension due to gas, poor digestion, poor absorption of nutrients, and vitamin deficiency.